



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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**TWO MEN RESIDING IN PROGRESS VILLAGE INDICTED
FOR SELLING FIREARMS AND NARCOTICS PURSUANT TO
THE UNITED STATES VIOLENT CRIME IMPACT TEAM INITIATIVE**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez and Ralph C. Ostrowski, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives today announced the unsealing of an indictment of Claudius Clarke, age 28, and McJames Simmons, age 26, of Tampa, Florida. They were arrested on August 4, 2005. The indictment charges the defendants with conspiring knowingly to possess firearms and ammunition after being convicted of numerous felony crimes, and engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a federal firearms license. The indictment also charges both defendants with being convicted felons in possession of firearms and ammunition. In addition, the indictment charges the defendants with the distribution of in excess of 75 grams of crack cocaine. The maximum penalties defendants Clarke and Simmons face is life imprisonment and a fine of \$4 million.

According to the indictment, between the dates of November 16, 2004 and May 25,

2005 in Tampa, Florida, the defendants sold the crack cocaine to undercover agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. The defendants also sold ten firearms to these undercover agents, including numerous semi-automatic rifles and pistols. This undercover operation is part of the United States Department of Justice on going Violent Crime Impact Team Initiative to assist local law enforcement. The charged criminal activity occurred in Progress Village in Tampa.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael E. Runyon.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.